**BLINDSIGHT**

**Do your fingers see better than your eyes?**

By David Hetherington

The sight of a child's hand reaching across the table for a piece of food has long been the basis of our popular concepts of blindness and visual impairment. The visual system is so complex, and so critical to our survival, that it is often difficult to assess whether a person is truly blind or not. Thus, the distinction between visual and non-visual systems can sometimes be quite blurry.

**EXPERIMENT 1** Imagine that you have to remove the red disc from the series of red discs in Figure 1 and tell me the distance of the disc to the left. Now take a pair of red discs and move them around the room until you think the disc is lined up with the target. Do the same for the red disc, sitting in the shape of large blue discs in Figure 2. The points where you think you know the distance are the target.

**EXPERIMENT 2** One of your association visual systems will be the red disc in Figure 1. Do you think that the red disc is lined up with the target? When you think the red disc is lined up, tell me the distance.

The difference in the estimated distance of the red discs is large, but not as large as the difference in the visual systems. The visual system that is not involved in this experiment has been shown to be less accurate than the visual system that is involved.

This experiment demonstrates that the visual system is not only involved in the interpretation of visual information, but also in the interpretation of non-visual information. The visual system is not only involved in the interpretation of visual information, but also in the interpretation of non-visual information.